



Global Picketline

Proposal for international coordination

Submitted to AAWL Committee of Management

31 May 2017

Elements of Global Picketline

We have consolidated our documents relating to Global Picketline on one website: picketline.aawl.org.au

1. Strategy

Global Picketline is a strategy for organising campaigns to support workers involved in major disputes by developing joint or coordinated solidarity activities, across workplaces, industries and countries.

Global Picketline campaigns are developed by building working class solidarity connections and solidarity actions within class struggles.

2. Common demands

The process of developing a Global Picketline begins with the concept that workers have common demands across the world. This concept facilitates a discussion of some disputes and campaigns as international, and for the development of an international strategy.

The Global Labour Movement Charter is a document that has been developed over many years through meetings and discussions with many labour movement organisations across the world.

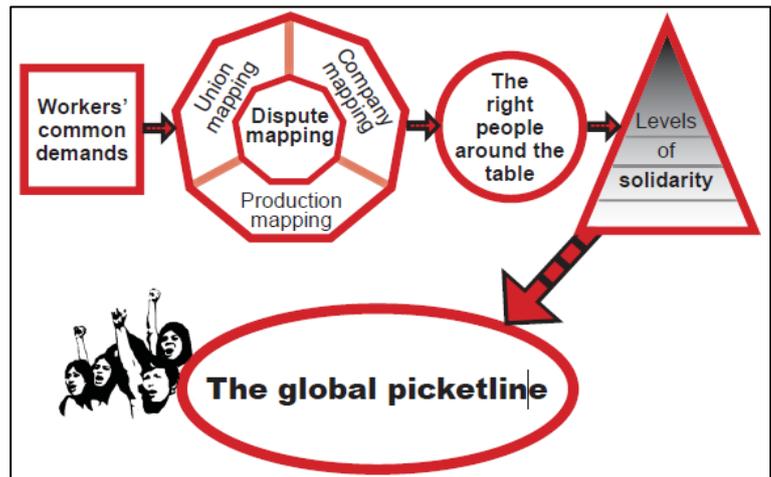
We consider the Global Labour Movement Charter a useful document to assist in discussions between genuine labour movement organisations who intend to work together to build *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* campaigns.



3. Dispute analysis

While it is possible to start discussing international labour movement communication and coordination before a dispute, in practice disputes are what has given impetus to our discussions and activities building *International Industrial Action and Solidarity*.

So when a major dispute happens we look at a series of conditions. We ask: *Is this dispute suited to a Global Picketline strategy?*



To be suited for a Global Picketline strategy, a dispute has to involve a large, possibly anti-union international company, with multiple production and distribution sites - where there is the active presence of genuine unions on multiple sites.

If all the conditions for a possible Global Picketline are present, we then prepare a dispute analysis, which includes an assessment the importance of the dispute for the workers involved and for the working class, the perceived strengths and weaknesses between workers and the company, and a detailed history of the dispute.

In our experience an *International Industrial Action and Solidarity* campaign takes significant time and resources to organise, so it is most suited to major disputes that are seen as important for the working class, in that they may result in a major victory or major defeat for workers, with considerable flow-on effects.

4. Strategic plan

If a decision is made that a dispute is suited to a Global Picketline strategy, a strategic plan can be developed. This involves dispute mapping, including company mapping, union mapping (the unions involved plus potential allies) and production mapping (identifying strategic production or distribution choke points).

Once a strategic plan is outlined and approved, a Global Picketline campaign can be launched. A dispute slogan should be developed, aimed at workers located throughout the dispute map.

Campaign coordinators are appointed. Their task is to contact the workers and unions involved, liaise with workers and unions to develop the Global Picketline campaign, help prepare and share documents and proposals, assist in organising communication and meetings, assist in developing joint activities, and report on progress.

5. *The right people around the table*

Global Picketline is an international campaign, so many of the workers, union officials and activists developing the campaign can't actually meet together. But we still imagine the campaign being developed by all of us together, sitting at the same table.

As we develop a Global Picketline, it becomes clear that particular workers, union officials and activists are much better placed to assist in developing solidarity activities. Obviously the workers directly involved in the dispute are the people who are best placed to propose and request solidarity actions. But some other workers, union officials and activists are also well placed to help to build a Global Picketline campaign. They are strategically placed to assist in the dispute. Possibly they are working in a related company; or possibly they are already active in an area that is strategically connected to the dispute. (Like a transport group used by the company in the dispute; or a housing area where all most of the workers involved in the dispute live).

We have called the workers and activists best placed to assist in a dispute *the right people around the table*. If *the right people around the table* can effectively work together, they can develop an international solidarity strategy to help workers win.

Through experience in many international campaigns, we now know some of the qualities that *the right people around the table* need to have.

They need to be people who want to help the workers win the dispute.

They need to be genuine unionists or genuine labour movement activists. That is, they can't be corrupt; they can't be acting on behalf of management, or for the police, or for the state bureaucracy.

The right people around the table can include prominent labour movement leaders; left activists; union officials; union delegates; union activists. They may be active in a union, a community group, in a left organisation or in an international labour movement structure. They need to be well situated to assist in the dispute. This means that *the right people around the table* will take turns at being in meetings and discussions, depending on the stage of a dispute, and also depending on the solidarity strategy and tactics that are chosen.

The right people around the table need to be supportive of international solidarity, and they need to be supportive of a strategy that brings together workers, union officials and activists from many unions, workplaces, industries and countries, meeting as comrades in constructive discussions to help fellow workers.

6. Levels of solidarity

Increasingly effective solidarity actions are central to a Global Picketline.

We have learned that the first expression of solidarity tends to be a solidarity message, from one group of workers to another group of workers involved in a dispute.

This initial connection can be a first step to increase communication and discussion, with the aim of connecting the struggles of different groups of workers.

We know that increasing the level of solidarity actions is not easy, and may not be a linear process. Campaigns can be built, but can also retreat. Regular discussions between the workers involved in the dispute and workers developing solidarity activities are a necessary part of Global Picketline, and are necessary to maximise the impact of our activities.

7. Joint actions

Our objective is to strengthen connections and discussions to promote joint actions.

We aim to increase the reach and effectiveness of *International Industrial Action and Solidarity*. We know from experience that different groups of workers, in different workplaces, companies, industries, and countries, taking coordinated and mutually supportive action are able to multiply the effect of their actions and win disputes.



Joint actions may not always achieve it, but our aim is to support workers consciously joining together in a global struggle, encompassing many local demands that are connected across companies and industries, to achieve significant gains for the whole working class.

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